1			
2	JED RUBENFELD NY Bar # 2214104		
3	1031 Forest Rd. New Haven, CT 06515 Telephone: (203) 432-7631 E-mail: jed.rubenfeld@yale.edu Attorney for Plaintiffs American Values 2024 and Jessica Reed Kraus		
4			
5		ssica Reed Kraus	
6	ROGER I. TEICH	1100	
7	California State Bar No. 147076 337 Liberty Street		
8	San Francisco, CA 94114 Telephone: (415) 948-0045		
9	E-mail: rteich@juno.com		
10	Attorney for Plaintiff American Values 2024		
11	RICHARD JAFFE, ESQ. California State Bar No. 289362		
12	428 J Street, 4th Floor Sacramento, California 95814		
13	Tel: (916) 492-6038 E-mail: rickjaffeesquire@gmail.com		
14	Attorney for Plaintiffs Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. and Jes	ssica Reed Kraus	
15	UNITED STATES DIST		
16	NORTHERN DISTRICT COURT NORTHERN DISTRICT COURT SAN FRANCISCO DIVISION		
17			
18	ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR., AMERICAN VALUES 2024, and		
19	JESSICA REED KRAUS, Plaintiffs,	Case Number: 3:24-cv-02869	
$\begin{bmatrix} 20 \\ 51 \end{bmatrix}$	-V	VERIFIED AMENDED COMPLAINT	
21 22	META PLATFORMS, INC., FACEBOOK OPERATIONS, LLC, INSTAGRAM, LLC,	Jury Trial Demanded	
$\begin{bmatrix} 22 \\ 23 \end{bmatrix}$	MARK ZUCKERBERG, and JOHN DOES 1-10, Defendants.		
23 24	Dejenaums.		
25			
26	Page 1 of 35		

As and for their Verified First Amended Complaint herein, Plaintiffs state and allege as follows:

INTRODUCTION

- 1. This is an election interference case.
- 2. In violation of the Voting Rights Act, of civil rights laws dating back to the Civil War, of the First Amendment, and of the American people's fundamental right to a presidential election decided by voters, not by corporations, the social media giants Meta Platforms, Facebook, and Instagram are brazenly censoring speech by and supportive of Independent presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., while lying to the public about it.
- 3. In public, Meta declares: "We don't want to get in the way of open, public and democratic debate on Meta's platform—especially in the context of elections in democratic societies like the United States. The public should be able to hear what their politicians are saying . . . so that they can make informed choices at the ballot box."
- 4. But behind closed doors, Meta and its platforms are implementing a radically different agenda, preventing hundreds of millions of people from seeing, posting, or receiving speech supporting Mr. Kennedy's candidacy—and threatening users who attempt to do so.
- 5. Plaintiffs Kennedy and American Values 2024 ("AV24") originally filed this action on May 13, 2024, after Defendants prevented users from seeing or posting a film called *Who Is Bobby Kennedy*, while at the same time spinning a web of fantastic falsehoods about that film, for example telling users it contained "sexual" or "violent" or gun-related content.
- 6. It was Plaintiffs' hope that filing the complaint in this case would put Defendants on notice of the illegality of their brazen censorship of protected speech in the middle of a presidential election and persuade them to bring a halt to that censorship.

21. Because Defendants are deliberately inflicting injury on users who express support and advocacy for Mr. Kennedy, and because they are by threat, intimidation and force preventing users from engaging in such support or advocacy, they are violating the Support or Advocacy Clauses of the Civil Rights Act of 1871 (codified in Section 1985(3)) and Section 11(b) of the Voting Rights Act. Because their censorship is the result of collusion with the Federal Government, they are violating the First Amendment as well.

22. The irreparable harm Defendants are causing is so great and so immediate that it leaves Plaintiffs no choice: today, Plaintiffs hereby submit this First Amended Complaint to describe Defendants' ongoing, intensified censorship campaign, and by separate motion Plaintiffs seek immediate injunctive relief.

ALLEGATIONS COMMON TO ALL COUNTS

- 23. On May 3, 2024, Plaintiff American Values 2024 ("AV24"), a political action committee supporting Mr. Kennedy, released online a thirty-minute documentary film called *Who Is Bobby Kennedy*?²
- 24. The film offers a simple, honest look at Mr. Kennedy's life, formative experiences, accomplishments, character, and values, especially his belief in America and her founding principles, inviting voters to make up their own minds about Mr. Kennedy, rather than accepting falsehoods about him repeatedly asserted by major news outlets and social media platforms.
- 25. The film is the property of AV24, which paid approximately one million dollars to cover production costs.

² The film can be viewed at www.whoisbobbykennedy.com.

3

4

5

6

7 8

9

10

11

12

13

14 15

16

17

18 19

20

21

22 23

24

25

26

accounts and/or other punitive action if they persisted in such activity and were warned that "repeatedly breaking our rules can cause accounts more restrictions."

- 36. Defendants made good on these threats, penalizing users for multiple (blocked) attempts to share the link, including having restrictions imposed on their Facebook and/or Instagram accounts, and including in some cases account suspensions.
- 37. Users received messages giving a wide variety of explanations of Facebook's and Instagram's actions, including assertions that Who Is Bobby Kennedy violated Facebook's "community standards," that it was "spam," that it "praise[d] organized crime or hate groups," that it "solicit[ed] sexual services," that it contained "sexual activity," or "violent or graphic content," that it offered the "sale of firearms or drugs," or that it "may be malicious."
- 38. All these suggestions were and are absurd.
- 39. Who Is Bobby Kennedy contains no "sexual activity," no "violent or graphic content," no "praise" of "organized crime or hate groups," no "solicitation" or "sexual services," and no offers for the "sale of firearms or drugs."
- 40. On some users' pages, when they tried to watch Who Is Bobby Kennedy?, a still shot from the film was displayed, and along with a message saying that the film was "blocked," a COVID overlay was inserted into the still shot saying "COVID-19 vaccine" and directing users to get information from other recommended sources, such as the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ("CDC"), an agency that has been integral to the Administration's online censorship campaign directed at COVID- and vaccine-related content. See, e.g., Missouri v.

³ The Kennedy campaign has received hundreds of screenshots from third-party users showing the threats, intimidation and sanctions the users themselves received from Meta for attempting to watch, post or link to the film.

Biden, 83 F.4th at 361-62 ("CDC officials also provided direct guidance to the platforms on the application of the platforms' internal policies and moderation activities."); *Missouri v. Biden*, 2023 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 114585, at *51 ("Federal officials informed Facebook that the federal health authority that could dictate what content could be censored as misinformation was the CDC.").

- 41. There is nothing about COVID that could conceivably be called misinformation in *Who Is Bobby Kennedy* (indeed there are virtually no references to COVID at all), and the film contains nothing else that comes remotely close to a violation of any social media platform's "community standards."
- 42. Defendants' censorship of *Who Is Bobby Kennedy* has prevented the film from reaching tens of millions of Facebook and Instagram users, and millions more people with whom those Facebook and Instagram users would have shared the film.
- 43. In the early morning of May 5, 2024, after receiving considerable negative press, Meta claimed in a statement to the New York Times that its censorship of *Who Is Bobby Kennedy* was the result of a "mistaken" determination that the film was "spam," that the "mistake" had been corrected, and that the film was no longer being censored.
- 44. These claims too were false.
- 45. To begin with, Defendants did *not* stop censoring *Who Is Bobby Kennedy*; they continued to censor it after May 5, and they are still doing so even now.
- 46. Both before and after May 5, Facebook and Instagram users were hit with account suspensions for trying to share or link to *Who Is Bobby Kennedy*.
- 47. To give just one of innumerable examples, on May 7, a Kennedy supporter located in California sought to post a link to *Who Is Bobby Kennedy* on both Instagram and Facebook, but

was blocked from doing so. When he continued trying to share the film with others through his

Facebook page, he received a message from Facebook stating that his account had been placed

7 ||

content.

under a 24-hour suspension during which he would not be able to post any further content on it.

48. Even now, Meta is continuing to "shadow-ban" and "de-boost" the film, for example by preventing links to the film from appearing on users' timelines or feeds, techniques through which Meta deliberately, substantially but surreptitiously reduces the reach and dissemination of

- 49. At the same time, Meta has continued to send messages to users falsely stating that the film is "spam" or contains "sexual" or "violent" content.
- 50. The notion that *Who Is Bobby Kennedy* was being accidentally censored because it was mistaken for "spam" is highly implausible on its face.
- 51. Spam refers to in-bulk dissemination of messages, especially commercial messages, to large numbers of recipients, whereas Defendants were censoring individual users from merely posting a link on their own pages to a website displaying a political film. Moreover, the "mistaken as spam" claim is further contradicted by (a) the numerous messages users received from Meta offering other, equally bogus explanations; and (b) the fact that Defendants are brazenly censoring messages merely expressing support for Mr. Kennedy, demonstrating that Defendants are systematically targeting pro-Kennedy content.
- 52. By comparison to the viral impact of *Who Is Bobby Kennedy* on X, where the film's original posting has now been viewed one hundred million times, the film's reach on Instagram and Facebook has been minimal, demonstrating the immensely powerful suppressive effect of Defendants' censorship and threats.

- D. Facebook and Instagram users were prevented from sharing links to news coverage of a RFK, Jr. Debate Rally in Miami, Florida.
- 65. In every such case, Defendants also sent threats to such users warning them that attempts to repost the censored content would result in account restrictions, suspensions, and/or terminations.
- 66. Meta even made private messages between users with links to "RFK, Jr." unavailable on Instagram.
- 67. Defendants are also removing posts that share a link—and threatening users with suspensions if they continue sharing a link—to www.kennedydebunked.com, a website offering refutations of false statements made about Mr. Kennedy.
- 68. Almost comically, Meta is also deploying its AI Chatbot to deflect simple queries about whether Mr. Kennedy is running for President with bogus responses such as "Robert F Kennedy, Jr. has not announced his candidacy for president" and "As for the current political landscape, there are no Kennedys currently running for president in the 2024 elections."
- 69. Finally, adding obstruction to injury, Defendants are now blocking links to a dedicated off-platform website, www.kennedycensored.com, where social media users are invited to report and submit evidence of their own experience of being censored for posting pro-Kennedy content.
- 70. A vivid illustration of the intimidating censorship of pro-Kennedy content faced by users of Defendants' platforms is provided by Plaintiff Jessica Reed Kraus, an independent journalist with over 330,000 paid subscribers to her Substack blog, "@HouseInhabit" and an Instagram following of 1.2 million.

- 71. Ms. Reed Kraus covers politics and popular culture, with "behind-the-scenes" insights, and monetizes her work by posting free content on Instagram that in turn draws subscribers to her paid Substack account.
- 72. Since October 2023, she has invested significant time and resources following both former President Trump and Mr. Kennedy on the campaign trail. Her Instagram account has been widely censored and demoted for her coverage of Mr. Kennedy, but not for her coverage of President Trump.
- 73. Last October, Ms. Reed Kraus wrote supportively on Instagram about Mr. Kennedy's "divorce" from the Democrats, and her account lost 40,000 followers overnight.
- 74. There is no explanation for this unprecedented phenomenon other than a surreptitious "demoting" or "de-boosting" of her Instagram account by Defendants due to her supportive remarks about Mr. Kennedy.
- 75. In November, 2023, after a month of covering Kennedy regularly in her daily Instagram feed, her story views plummeted—again, an unprecedented event explainable only by the fact that Defendants were "shadow-banning" (i.e., reducing the dissemination of) her content due to her pro-Kennedy content.
- 76. Her posts supporting Mr. Kennedy were constantly flagged with "COVID-19 misinformation" warnings, despite containing no such misinformation.
- 77. Moreover, her account was restricted from being shown to non-followers—a critically damaging restriction, because it prevented her from recruiting new subscribers to her paid Substack.
- 78. In May 2024, Ms. Reed Kraus was given an exclusive to launch *Who is Bobby Kennedy* online.

1 **PARTIES** 2 87. Plaintiff Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. is an award-winning lawyer, author, American citizen, 3 and current candidate for President of the United States. 4 5 88. Plaintiff American Values 2024 (AV24) is a super PAC committed to educating and 6 mobilizing voters to elect candidates who will restore and protect the soul of democracy in the 7 United States. Currently, AV24 supports Mr. Kennedy's presidential campaign. 8 89. Plaintiff Jessica Reed Kraus is an independent journalist, a resident of California, and an 9 American citizen eligible to vote. Ms. Reed Kraus covers politics and popular culture, with 10 "behind-the-scenes" insights, and monetizes her work by posting free content on Instagram that 11 in turn draws subscribers to her paid Substack account. 12 90. Defendant Meta Platforms, Inc. is a trillion-dollar social media corporation headquartered 13 at 1 Hacker Way in Menlo Park, California. 14 91. Defendant Facebook Operations, LLC is and/or operates the vastly popular social media 15 platform known as Facebook, and is headquartered in California. 16 92. Defendant Instagram, LLC, is and/or operates the popular social media platform known 17 as Instagram, and is headquartered in California. 18 93. Defendant Mark Zuckerberg is Meta's CEO and controlling shareholder and a resident of 19 California. 20 94. Defendants John Doe 1-10 are officers and employees of Meta, Facebook, and/or 21 Instagram, whose identities are unknown to Plaintiffs, who knowingly participated in, agreed to 22 implement, or knowingly neglected or refused to prevent the censorship of Who Is Bobby 23 *Kennedy*, despite having power to prevent or aid in preventing the commission of the same. 24 25 Page 15 of 35 26

1 JURISDICTION, VENUE, AND DIVISION 2 95. The Court has jurisdiction under the Constitution, 28 U.S.C. § 1331, and 42 U.S.C. 3 §§ 1985, 1986, as this case arises out of Defendants' violation of the First Amendment and of the 4 5 Civil Rights Act of 1871 as alleged herein. Venue is proper because of Meta forum-selection clauses, because all Defendants reside 6 96. 7 in this state and at least one Defendant resides in this district, because the events in question 8 substantially took place here, and/or because several of the Defendants are subject to personal 9 jurisdiction here. 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b)(1)-(3). 10 97. This case should be assigned to the San Francisco Division based on the Defendants' 11 location in this Division, and because many of the wrongdoings arose in this Division. 12 **COUNT ONE:** 13 VIOLATION OF SECTION 11(b) OF THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT 14 98. Section 11(b) of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 forbids any person, "whether acting under 15 color of law or otherwise," to "intimidate, threaten, or coerce any person . . . for urging . . . any 16 person to vote." 52 U.S.C. § 10307(b). 17 99. Section 11(b) creates a private right of action. See, e.g., Krabach v. King Cnty, No. 2:22-18 cv-1252-BJR, 2023 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 191870, at *7-8 (W.D. Wash. Oct. 25, 2023). 19 100. "Section 11(b) 'is to be given an expansive meaning." Statement of Interest of the 20 United States of America, Aug. 12, 2022, ECF 235 in National Coalition on Black Civic 21 Participation v. Wohl, No. 1:20-cv-08668-VM-OTW (S.D.N.Y.) (quoting Jackson v. Riddell, 22 476 F. Supp. 849, 859 (S.D. Miss. 1979)). 23 101. By its express terms, Section 11(b) does not require state action, but can be violated by 24 private parties not "acting under color of law." 52 U.S.C. § 10307(b). 25 Page 16 of 35

7 8

102. The words "intimidate, threaten, or coerce" in Section 11(b) are not limited to physical
threats or violence. They also encompass more subtle forms of pressure, including economic
harm and threats to deprive a person of anything of value, as well as false statements intended to
prevent or dissuade people from engaging in protected voting-related activity. See, e.g., United
States v. Mackey, No. 21-CR-80 (AMD), 2023 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 186646, at *65-66 (E.D.N.Y.
Oct. 17, 2023) (upholding conviction for disseminating false information online intended to trick
people into not voting, and holding that the words "injure, oppress, threaten, or intimidate" in 18
U.S.C. § 241 encompass not only "violence," but also "false utterances") (emphasis added).
103. Section 11(b) does not protect only the act of voting itself, but also, by its plain language
the act of "urging" people to vote, 52 U.S.C. § 10307(b), which in turn includes "encourag[ing]
others to vote," H.R. Rep. No. 89-439, at 30 (1965), reprinted in 1965 U.S.C.C.A.N. 2462,
for a particular candidate
104. In disseminating Who Is Bobby Kennedy, AV24 was advocating for Mr. Kennedy, trying
to persuade viewers to consider his candidacy, and urging and encouraging people to vote for
him, as were countless censored Facebook and Instagram users (including Plaintiff Reed Kraus)
who tried to share the film.
105. Similarly, Ms. Reed Kraus was urging and encouraging people to vote for Mr. Kennedy
when she posted the pro-Kennedy content that led to her suspensions by Defendants, and so wer
the many other users who posted the censored expressions of pro-Kennedy support described
above.
106. Defendants' censorship of those posts and of Who Is Bobby Kennedy was in violation of

their Terms of Service, in breach of their contracts with their users, and unlawful.

107. Unlawfully censoring such speech forced and coerced users not to urge persons to vote for Mr. Kennedy.

108. Unlawfully restricting and threatening to restrict the accounts of people who engaged in such speech threatened and intimidated people for urging others to vote by (a) inflicting or threatening to inflict economic harm on them; (b) injuring or threatening to injure them in their property and contract rights; (c) cutting them off or threatening to cut them off from participation in the modern public square; and (d) in other respects depriving or threatening to deprive them of things of value.

109. Thus through the actions described above, Defendants committed and are committing innumerable violations of Section 11(b) of the Voting Rights Act.

COUNT TWO: CONSPIRACY TO INJURE ON ACCOUNT OF SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY IN VIOLATION OF 42 U.S.C. § 1985(3)

110. All foregoing allegations are repeated and realleged.

111. The Support or Advocacy Clauses of Section 1985, originally enacted as part of the Ku Klux Klan Act of 1871, prohibit conspiracies "to injure any citizen in person or property on account of" such citizen's "giving his support or advocacy in a legal manner, toward or in favor of the election of any lawfully qualified person as an elector for President." 42 U.S.C. § 1985(3). 112. Unlike the "equal protection" or "equal privileges" clauses of Section 1985(3), the

Support or Advocacy Clauses are not limited to class-based discrimination and do not require state action or the involvement of government officials. *See, e.g., Cervini v. Cisneros*, 593 F. Supp. 3d 530 (W.D. Tex. 2023); Memorandum of Law of the United States Regarding the

Page 18 of 35

1 Constitutionality and Interpretation of the "Support or Advocacy" Clause of 42 U.S.C. § 2 1985(3), Apr. 5, 2024, ECF No. 386 in Cervini v. Cisneros, No. AU:21-CV-00565-RP (W.D. 3 Tex. 2023) (hereafter "Memorandum of Law of the United States") (attached hereto as Exh. 1). 4 5 113. Parties to a Section 1985(3) conspiracy can include natural persons, corporations, private 6 actors, state officials, and federal officials. 7 114. Section 1985(3) creates a private cause of action against any and all such conspirators by 8 any person injured in his person or property by acts taken in furtherance of the conspiracy, and in 9 such actions the court may award injunctive relief as well as monetary damages. 10 115. Expressing support for or advocacy of a presidential candidate qualifies as an act of 11 support or advocacy "toward or in favor of the election of any lawfully qualified person as an 12 elector for President" under the Support or Advocacy Clauses of Section 1985(3). See, e.g., 13 Cervini v. Cisneros, 593 F. Supp. 3d 530, 532, 539 (W.D. Tex. 2023) (recognizing cause of 14 action under Support or Advocacy Clause where private actor defendants allegedly harassed 15 individuals riding in a Biden-Harris campaign tour bus); Memorandum of Law of the United 16 States, *supra*, at 1 (Support or Advocacy Clauses protect and apply to "support or advocacy of 17 candidates in federal elections"). 18 An "injury" to "person or property" for Section 1985(3) purposes "does not need to be 116. 19 one of violence or bodily harm; rather, 'economic harm, legal action, dissemination of personal 20 information," and intangible invasions of protected interests "can qualify depending on the 21 circumstances." Krabach, 2023 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 191870, at *17 (quoting Nat'l Coal. on Black) 22 Civic Participation v. Wohl, 498 F. Supp. 3d 457, 477 (S.D.N.Y. 2020)). 23 24 25

26

Page 19 of 35

Page 20 of 35

must certainly be exercising ov

125.	Such human review teams and/or executive officers at Facebook, Instagram and Meta
made t	he decision to suppress (and continue suppressing) the censored pro-Kennedy content
describ	ped above.

- 126. It cannot be a coincidence that Facebook and Instagram, each of which is under the control of Meta, are both suppressing the same pro-Kennedy content.
- 127. It is at a minimum highly likely, if not virtually certain, that Defendants Meta, Facebook, and Instagram, together with the responsible human review teams at each company, as well as the responsible officers and employees at each company (such human reviewers, officers, and employees named herein as John Doe Defendants) formed an agreement with one another to censor pro-Kennedy content.
- 128. In addition to forming these agreements with one another, Defendants and their officers and agents met in person and communicated electronically with White House officials and many other federal officials innumerable times to discuss censorship policies and specific censorship decisions. *See, e.g., Missouri*, 2023 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 114585, at *13-35; Congressional Report, *supra*, at 10-51.
- 129. In and through these communications, Meta, Facebook, Instagram, and Zuckerberg formed a self-described "partnership" agreement with the White House and other federal entities and officials to adopt and implement policies: (a) to censor content disfavored by the Biden Administration, including specifically speech that questioned COVID vaccines, even when such content was factually true or protected opinion, including discussions of vaccine opposition framed in terms of constitutional rights or civil liberties; (b) to undermine such speech and reduce its appeal and effect, including by falsely communicating to users that the content was "misinformation"; (c) to threaten users who persisted in seeking to post or share such content

7 ||

with suspension, de-platforming, account freezing, account termination, and/or other punitive
measures; and (d) to take such punitive actions against users who sought to post or share such
content.
130. Defendant Zuckerberg (as well as other senior Meta executives) played a direct and
significant role in deciding on Meta's response to the Government's communications and in
forging Meta's "partnership" with the Government. See, e.g., Congressional Report, supra, at 10
("After months of pressure, top Facebook executives, including Mark Zuckerberg, Sheryl
Sandberg, and Nick Clegg decided that Facebook had 'bigger fish to fry' with the Biden
Administration, such as issues related to 'data flows,' and defending free expression on the
companies' platforms was not worth drawing the ire of the [most] powerful office in the
world.").
131. By and through these agreements—with one another and with federal officials—
Defendants conspired to inflict injury on voting citizens (including Mr. Kennedy and Ms. Reed
Kraus) who engaged in support or advocacy favoring Mr. Kennedy, and such injuries included:
suspending or disabling Facebook and Instagram users' social media accounts; depriving
Facebook and Instagram users of control over their social media accounts; depriving Facebook
and Instagram users of moneys earned through or in connection with their social media accounts;
causing intimidation and fear of loss by threatening users with account termination; injuring Mr.
Kennedy's reputation; and injuring Mr. Kennedy's presidential campaign.
132. Defendants took innumerable actions in furtherance of this conspiracy, including: (A)
every act of censorship (including shadow-banning, removal of content, blocking of content,

restricting reach of content, account restrictions, and account suspensions) they imposed on users

who sought to share Who Is Bobby Kennedy or to engage in other pro-Kennedy speech; (B) every

26

act of disseminating false, disparaging statements about Who Is Bobby Kennedy; and (C) every other act of censorship, threatened account suspension, and actual account suspension, described above directed at users who expressed support or advocacy in favor of Mr. Kennedy. 133. As a result of these actions, Defendants effected all the injuries enumerated above. 134. As a result of these actions, Plaintiff AV24 suffered injury to property, including: economic harm; reputational harm; the suppressed reach of AV24's film Who Is Bobby Kennedy; the loss of value of Who Is Bobby Kennedy; and the loss of donations as a result of the suppression of Who Is Bobby Kennedy. As a result of these actions, Plaintiff Kennedy suffered injury to person and property. including: economic harm; reputational harm; loss of donations; and damage to his presidential campaign. 136. As a result of these actions, Plaintiff Reed Kraus suffered injury to person and property, including: suspension or disabling of her social media account; deprivation of control over her social media accounts; deprivation of moneys earned through or in connection with her social media account; and intimidation and fear of loss as a result of threatened termination of social media accounts. 137. Accordingly, under Section 1985(3), all Plaintiffs were injured in their persons and property through acts taken in furtherance of the Defendants' conspiracies, and were moreover deprived of having and exercising their rights and privileges as citizens to support and advocate for the presidential candidate of their choice, and may therefore sue each and every one of the Defendants conspired with one another, and with federal officials, to injure users of Facebook

and Instagram who posted content in support of Mr. Kennedy's candidacy for President.

COUNT THREE: CONSPIRACY TO PREVENT SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY IN VIOLATION OF 42 U.S.C. § 1985(3)

- 138. All foregoing allegations are repeated and realleged.
- 139. Section 1985(3) also, independently. prohibits conspiracies to "prevent by force, intimidation, or threat, any citizen who is lawfully entitled to vote, from giving his support or advocacy in a legal manner, toward or in favor of the election of any lawfully qualified person as an elector for President." 42 U.S.C. § 1985(3).
- 140. The words "threat," "intimidation," and "injury" in federal statutes protecting against election interference and prohibiting private actors from hindering citizens seeking to engage in lawful election activity encompass not only physical violence but also misrepresentation intended to prevent or dissuade people from engaging in such activity. *See, e.g., United States v. Mackey*, No. 21-CR-80 (AMD), 2023 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 186646, at *65-66 (E.D.N.Y. Oct. 17, 2023) (upholding conviction for disseminating false information online intended to trick people into not voting, and holding that the words "injure, oppress, threaten, or intimidate" in 18 U.S.C. § 241 encompass not only "violence," but also "*false utterances*") (emphasis added).
- 141. The non-consented-to blocking of support or advocacy of a presidential candidate that does not violate any of Defendants' terms of service qualifies as an act of "force" for Section 1985(3) purposes.
- 142. The punitive restriction or suspension of users' social media accounts on account of engaging in such support or advocacy qualifies as an act of "force" for Section 1985(3) purposes.
- 143. The threat to suspend or other punish for posting, watching, sharing, or linking to such support or advocacy qualifies as "intimidation or threat" for Section 1985(3) purposes.

144. Inr	rough the agreements described above—both with one another and with rederal
officials—	Defendants conspired to prevent citizens from posting or sharing Who Is Bobby
Kennedy aı	nd from engaging in other support or advocacy favoring Mr. Kennedy's candidacy
through suc	ch acts of misrepresentation, force, threat, and intimidation.

- 145. Defendants took innumerable actions in furtherance of this conspiracy, including: (A) every act of censorship (including shadow-banning, removal of content, blocking of content, restricting reach of content, account restrictions, and account suspensions) they imposed on users who sought to share *Who Is Bobby Kennedy* or to engage in other pro-Kennedy speech; (B) every act of disseminating false, disparaging statements about *Who Is Bobby Kennedy*.
- 146. As a result of these actions, Plaintiff AV24 suffered injury to property, including: economic harm; reputational harm; the suppressed reach of AV24's film *Who Is Bobby Kennedy*; the loss of value of *Who Is Bobby Kennedy*; and the loss of donations as a result of the suppression of *Who Is Bobby Kennedy*.
- 147. As a result of these actions, Plaintiff Kennedy suffered injury to person and property, including: economic harm; reputational harm; loss of donations; and damage to his presidential campaign.
- 148. As a result of these actions, Plaintiff Reed Kraus suffered injury to person and property, including: suspension or disabling of her social media accounts; deprivation of control over her social media account; deprivation of moneys earned through or in connection with her social media account; and intimidation and fear of loss as a result of threatened termination of social media accounts.
- 149. Accordingly, under Section 1985(3), all Plaintiffs were injured in their persons and property through acts taken in furtherance of the Defendants' conspiracy, and were moreover

1 deprived of having and exercising their rights and privileges as citizens to support and advocate 2 for the presidential candidate of their choice, and may therefore sue each and every one of the 3 Defendants. 4 **COUNT FOUR:** 5 **VIOLATION OF 42 U.S.C. § 1986** 6 150. All foregoing allegations are repeated and realleged. 7 151. Under Section 1986 of the Civil Rights Act of 1871, a person who knows that a Section 8 1985 wrong is "about to be committed," and who has the power "to prevent or aid in preventing 9 the commission thereof," acts unlawfully if he "neglects or refuses to do so." 42 U.S.C. § 1986. 10 152. Through its officers and employees, Defendant Meta knew that all the Section 1985 11 wrongs described above were about to be committed and had power to prevent those wrongs and 12 neglected or refused to do so. 13 In addition, Defendant Zuckerberg, as Meta's famously hands-on CEO, must have known 153. 14 and did know that Meta was censoring Who Is Bobby Kennedy, and that the Section 1985 wrongs 15 described above were about to be committed (and still are being committed), had power to 16 prevent those wrongs, and neglected or refused to do so. 17 In addition, certain unknown John Doe Defendants knew that the Section 1985 wrongs 154. 18 described above were about to be committed, had power to prevent those wrongs and neglected 19 or refused to do so. 20 21 155. Accordingly, Defendants Meta, Zuckerberg and certain of the John Does violated 42 22 U.S.C. § 1986 and are liable for all damage caused. 23 **COUNT FIVE:** 24

VIOLATION OF THE FIRST AMENDMENT

156. All preceding allegations are repeated and realleged.

25

26

Page 26 of 35

- 157. Defendants' above-described censorship of pro-Kennedy speech is the result of joint action with, and pressure from, federal governmental actors.
- 158. A years-long, systematic campaign by the White House and other federal entities and officials to induce the country's dominant social media platforms—prominently including Meta—to censor protected speech has been found by the District Court of the Western District of Louisiana⁴ and by the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit⁵ to constitute sufficient coercion, significant encouragement, and collusion to turn social media censorship into state action in violation of the First Amendment.⁶
- 159. Those Courts also found, expressly and specifically, that the Federal Government has specifically targeted Mr. Kennedy for censorship and that Meta has specifically censored him at the Government's behest.
- 160. The opinions issued, and detailed factual findings made, by those courts are incorporated herein by reference and are, in any event, publicly available, and Plaintiffs assert their First Amendment claims on the basis of those detailed factual findings as well as on the basis of the allegations set forth above.
- 161. In addition, a May 1, 2024 congressional report (the "Congressional Report")⁷ detailing the Administration's social-media censorship campaign is also incorporated herein by reference,

⁴ See Kennedy v. Biden, No. 3:23-CV-00381, 2024 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 26751 (W.D. La. Feb. 14, 2024).

⁵ See Missouri v. Biden, 83 F.4th 350 (5th Cir. 2023).

The injunction issued by the District Court and affirmed as modified by the Fifth Circuit was reversed on standing grounds by the Supreme Court in *Murthy v. Missouri*, No. 23-411, 2024 U.S. LEXIS 2842 (U.S. June 26, 2024), but the High Court did not reach the merits.

⁷ U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on the Judiciary and the Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government, *The Censorship-Industrial Complex: How Top Biden White House Officials Coerced Big Tech To Censor Americans, True Information, And Critics Of The Biden Administration* at 1 (May 1, 2024),

1 and Plaintiffs also assert their First Amendment claims on the basis of the copiously documented 2 communications between Defendants and the Federal Government described and quoted in that 3 report. 4 5 162. A summary of key relevant facts follows. 6 163. Barely three days into the Biden Administration, "[a]t 1:04 a.m. on January 23, 2021, the 7 White House flagged an anti-vaccine tweet by Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. ('RFK Jr.') and instructed 8 Twitter to 'get moving on the process for having it removed ASAP.' . . . Thus began a campaign 9 of 'unrelenting pressure from the most powerful office in the world' to 'bend [social-media 10 platforms] to the government's will." Brief of Respondents at 3, Feb. 2, 2024, Murthy v. 11 Missouri, No. 23-411 (U.S. 2023) (quoting Missouri v. Biden, 83 F.4th 350, 371 (5th Cir. 2023)). 12 164. As Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito put it, since early 2021, "Government officials 13 have asked social media platforms to block Mr. Kennedy's efforts to communicate with the 14 public and that the platforms have complied." Murthy v. Missouri, 144 S. Ct. 32, 32 (2023) 15 (Alito, J., dissenting from denial of motion to intervene) (describing findings made in *Missouri v*.) 16 Biden, No. 3:22-CV-01213, 2023 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 114585, at *5, 9, 40 (W.D. La. July 4, 17 2023)). 18 165. As the Congressional Report states, "[b]y the end of 2021, Facebook, YouTube, and 19 Amazon changed their content moderation policies in ways that were directly responsive" to 20 requests and demands made by the Biden Administration.⁸ 21 22 23 https://judiciary.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/republicans-judiciary.house.gov/files/evo-media-24 document/Biden-WH-Censorship-Report-final.pdf. ⁸ *Id*. 25

Page 28 of 35

With extensive quotation from internal Facebook emails and other documents, the

Congressional Report describes the "collusion" between Facebook and the White House

166.

J

eventually resulting in an agreement by Facebook pursuant to which the platform would and did implement censorship policies suppressing critics of the Administration, particularly critics of its COVID policies, specifically including Mr. Kennedy.⁹

167. Mr. Kennedy is only one of innumerable Americans whom the country's behemoth social media platforms censored in collusion and partnership with the White House and other

government entities and officials, in what the Western District of Louisiana has called "arguably the most massive attack against free speech in United States history." *Missouri v. Biden*, 2023

U.S. Dist. LEXIS 114585, at *158.

168. In this "massive attack against free speech," Meta has been the government's censor-inchief.

169. At the urging of, and in conspiracy with, the White House, Meta agreed to censor and does censor content that does not violate Facebook's policy.

170. In communications with federal officials about whom and what to censor, Meta has offered itself as, and acted as, a "partner" with the White House "to drive behavior." *See id.* at *18 ("Meta also stated [in email communications with the White House], 'We think there is considerably more we can do in "*partnership*" with you and your team to drive behavior.") (emphasis by the Court)).

171. At the urging of, and in conspiracy with, the White House, Meta censors content that does not contain misinformation. *See, e.g., id.* at *20 ("Facebook noted [in internal emails]

⁹ See id. at 8, 10-51; id. at 44 (deplatforming of Mr. Kennedy from Instagram).

177. In that ruling, the District Court made express, specific factual findings Meta Platforms had worked jointly with the Federal Government to specifically target Mr. Kennedy for censorship. *Id.* at *13-14.¹⁰

178. In addition, the District Court found that Mr. Kennedy (together with the other plaintiffs in the proceedings) had "produced evidence of a massive effort by Defendants, from the White House to federal agencies, to suppress speech based on its content," "likely result[ing] in millions of free speech violations." *Id.* at *30.

179. Meta's censorship policies with respect to COVID- and vaccine-related content in particular—its actual policies, as well as the policies it publicly proclaims—are the product of government coercion and significant encouragement, and of Meta's participation in joint action with the government, and are therefore state action for constitutional purposes.

180. One of the principal means by which the White House and other federal actors coerced and colluded in social media censorship was by inducing social media companies to "alter[] their algorithms," change their content moderation policies, and change their terms of service.

Missouri, 83 F.4th at 397; see also Missouri, 2023 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 114585, at *159 (Federal Defendants pressured social media companies to change their policies to suppress free speech).

¹⁰ The Supreme Court's recent decision reversing an injunction in a related case, *see Murthy v. Missouri*, No. 23-411, 2024 U.S. LEXIS 2842 (U.S. June 26, 2024), was based solely on standing, did *not* reach the merits, and has no effect on the factual findings in *Kennedy v. Biden*. Indeed, all three Justices who did reach the merits in *Murthy* would have affirmed the lower courts' First Amendment holdings. *See id.* at *47, 51, 78-92 (Alito, J., dissenting) ("What the officials did in this case ... was blatantly unconstitutional, and the country may come to regret the Court's failure to say so.").

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20 21

22

23

24

25

26

action against users who try to watch, share or post links to that film or otherwise express support or advocacy for Mr. Kennedy's candidacy; (iii) to desist from any further misrepresentations of that film; (iv) to desist from any further censorship (including "shadowbanning," "de-boosting," and all other forms of reducing reach) of support, advocacy, encouragement to vote, or urging to vote for Mr. Kennedy; (v) to immediately implement changes to Meta, Facebook, and Instagram content-moderation algorithms to stop all flagging, marking, censoring, and filtering of any kind based on the fact that content contains, refers or relates to Mr. Kennedy; (vi) to lift any suspensions, restrictions or other measures taken against users for expressing support or advocacy for Mr. Kennedy; (vii) to send all users a message saying expressly that content will not censored or deemed in violation of community standards merely because it expresses support for or advocates on behalf of Mr. Kennedy; and (viii) to desist from any further collusion with federal officials to censor speech by or supportive of Mr. Kennedy.

- C. An award of attorneys' fees and costs to Plaintiffs;
- D. An award of punitive damages to Plaintiffs in an amount to be determined at trial;
- E. An order requiring Defendants to make a public retraction of their false statements;
- F. A declaratory judgment declaring that Defendants have violated the First Amendment, Section 11(b) of the Voting Rights Act, 42 U.S.C. § 1985, and 42 U.S.C. § 1986 through the acts described above; and
- G. An award of such other and further relief as the Court may deem just and proper. Dated: July 23, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

1	
2	
3	JED RUBENFELD (NY Bar # 2214104)
4	(pro hac vice forthcoming) 1031 Forest Rd.
5	New Haven, CT 06515 Telephone: (203) 432-7631
6	E-mail: jed.rubenfeld@yale.edu
7	Attorney for Plaintiffs American Values 2024 and Jessica Reed Kraus
8	
9	ROGER I. TEICH
10	California State Bar No. 147076 337 Liberty Street
11	San Francisco, CA 94114 Telephone: (415) 948-0045
12	E-mail: rteich@juno.com
13	Attorney for Plaintiff American Values 2024
14	
15	RICHARD JAFFE, ESQ.
16	California Bar No. 289362 428 J Street, 4 th Floor
17	Sacramento, California 95814 Tel: 916-492-6038
18	Fax: 713-626-9420 E-mail: rickjaffeesquire@gmail.com
19	Attorney for Plaintiffs Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. and Jessica Reed Kraus
20	Thermoy 161 I lumining the series I i Itemized J, vir dila vession the da I i lumi
21	
22	
23	
24	
25	
26	Page 34 of 35

1 2 **VERIFICATION** 3 I, ANTHONY LYONS, declare under penalty of perjury as follows: 4 I am the Treasurer for American Values 2024 (AV24), a political action committee 1. 5 and one of the Plaintiffs in this action. 6 2. I have reviewed the foregoing First Amended Complaint and declare that the facts set 7 out therein are true to the best ofmy knowledge and belief, except those matters stated as upon 8 information and belief, which are true to the best of my belief. 9 I declare under penalty of perjury of the laws of the United States that the foregoing is true and 10 correct. 11 Executed this 22nd day of July, 2024. 12 13 14 15 16 I am the electronic filer of this document, and I hereby attest that Anthony Lyons, signatory of 17 this document, concurs in the filing hereof. 18 19 Roger Teich 20 21 Rick Jaffe 22 23 24 25 Page 35 of 35 26